

# Euroforum



Television: the not-so-hidden persuader. See page 3.

# Euroforum

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Editor-in-chief: Peter Doyle



## Television: the not-so-hidden persuader

It's legal in France and Germany but not in Belgium, although the unfortunate Belgians must put up with it.

The Danes, who are against it also, are luckier: none of the Scandinavian countries will allow it.

'It' is the salesman's patter, the singing commercial which punctuates radio and television programmes in seven of the nine countries of the European Community. Belgium and Denmark are the only hold-outs, although the many Belgian families that can pick up the programmes beamed by their neighbours receive them complete with advertising.

Depending on your point of view, radio and television commercials are either an opportunity to fix yourself a cuppa or a reminder not to forget to buy the toothpaste or dog biscuits or whatever next time you're out shopping.

Advertising seems inseparable from a free market economy—in fact from any economy which mass-produces goods and services. It is no longer enough to make a better mousetrap, or even a cheaper one. You must advertise it.

Radio, and especially television, is particularly important from the advertisers' viewpoint. It enables him both to reach a very wide audience and to make a strong psychological impact.

Because of its subliminal power, advertising, may be too important to be left to advertisers, a point made by a study carried out on behalf of COFACE, a body which represents family organizations at Community level. The study was financed by the European Commission.

It seeks to analyse radio and television advertising in order to see just what role consumer organizations, the public authorities and the European Commission can play.

It brings together a good deal of basic information, not easily available elsewhere, on radio and television stations in Community countries. (with the emphasis inevitably on those whose income is entirely or largely from advertising).

It also contains detailed information on the official regulations and advertising codes under which these stations operate and the controls to which they are subject; on advertising costs and the relationship of advertising to news.

What emerges clearly is that the part played by consumer organizations varies greatly from country to country. In some they are simply on the sidelines; in none do they have a decisive role. An attempt by French consumers to ban advertising of toys was defeated by the Prime Minister.

The stations themselves operate under a variety of conditions, especially as regards ownership and control.

Ownership can be vested in a public corporation (BBC) or in privately organized, non-profit making bodies (as in the Netherlands).

Radio- and Tele-Luxembourg, which is owned by private firms, is run for profit, as are the pirate stations which surface from time to time.

Given the very diverse situations which exist, there obviously cannot be a uniform answer to the problem of how consumer organizations and public bodies can play a more effective part.

As the COFACE study points out it is not simply a question of vetting commercials for false or exaggerated claims, or even of deciding which products cannot be advertised on the air.

The study highlights some of the real problems—such as the dramatic imbalance in strength between advertisers and their audience. It documents, for example, the income from advertising of several radio and television stations.

In 1977, French television earned £ 100 million (FF 826 million) from advertising. In the same year, the main German stations took in £ 50 million (DM 185 million).

As the report points out, these stations also broadcast news and other information programmes. Under these circumstances, advertising and freedom of information cannot be separated.

## Making it easier to live now and pay later

'Just sign at the bottom, never mind reading the fine print'. Most of us who have entered into hire purchase agreements will recognize this line of sales patter.

All too often the customer realizes that 'easy monthly payments' stretched out over several years mean that the final cost of the purchase will have doubled by the time all the interest has been paid.

While most consumer credit sales are protected from exorbitant interest rates through national laws, there is still a lot of room for improvement. Few countries in the European Community have a complete body of law protecting the buyer in all his credit transactions.

That's why the European Commission in Brussels has just proposed a sweeping general law that would provide this type of protection in all credit contracts. The experts who helped draw up this proposal say that only the United Kingdom has such an overall law and that some other countries have laws covering only one type of purchase or industry in the credit field.

The Commission feels that when adopted by the Council of Ministers the new measure would benefit not only the customer but also the credit institutions. It will give these firms a uniform set of laws throughout the Community which should make it easier for them to do business in any or all of the nine Member States.

The main aim, however, is to protect the consumer. This type of protection has been an objective of the Community since the adoption of its 1973 Consumer Action Programme.

The proposed law would make lenders provide complete and understandable information to the borrower on the rates of interest and other charges. A written contract would also take the mystery out of some credit operations.

The new law would also allow the borrower to repay the outstanding loan before its due date and even provide for a rebate in return for early repayment. In some cases now there is a penalty for early repayment.

There would also be regulations concerning the advertising of such sales to avoid misleading the customer by selective wording and half-truths about the cost or interest involved. And there are provisions protecting the borrowers' interest in case the contract is transferred from one credit agency to another.

The introduction of the proposal is only the first step in the Community's lengthy decision-making process. It will now require examination by the European Parliament and other organs before a decision is finally taken by the Council of Ministers.

But protection of the customer in credit operations has been one of the most urgent demands made by European consumer groups, so that the Ministers will be under considerable pressure to act quickly.

## A home of your own could be the poorhouse

Some people say that the decision of buying a home is the second most important in most peoples' lifetime—ranking just after the equally-emotional marriage decision.

But at the same time, it is becoming evident that the costs of home ownership are going through the roof. In a tight money situation such as exists now, this ambition is being driven out of reach for many working adults.

Even if a couple find the ideal home and, more importantly, find an institution that will lend them the money, the terms of the loan vary widely and in some cases can become one of the most oppressive millstones our modern society imposes on the borrower.

Borrowing the purchase price of a home is such a major issue that many governments, authorities and consumer protection groups are moving in to help. Many national governments have special legislation or agencies to help and protect the public in obtaining mortgage credit.

The European Commission is also considering a law that would establish common rules on the subject throughout the Community countries.

That's why the leading Community consumer organization, the European Bureau of Consumer Unions, (BEUC) has just launched a survey for its member groups on the same subject.

BEUC, which represents national consumer organizations' interests at Community level, is preparing a questionnaire asking them what home loan credit conditions are in their countries. Through this survey, it will have a better idea of the needs of the consumer-home-buyer and what changes it would recommend to the Commission in the preparation of the new Community law.

## Wider role urged for Commission

Representatives of the European Consumer Consultative Committee recently met the President of the European Commission, Roy Jenkins, to discuss the Community's Second Consumer Protection Programme which is currently being prepared.

They urged new laws to protect consumers but they also want the Commission to pay more attention to the effects of other Community policies on consumers. This would apply not only to the common farm policy but also to competition and energy.

Special measures to protect poorer consumers were also called for. These include price surveillance, maintaining the quality of public services and improving access to justice. Such measures it was argued would improve the 'human face' of the Community.

For his part Mr Jenkins confirmed (Euroforum 3/79) that the Commission would continue to look after consumer interests but it would leave to the Member States those matters best dealt with at a national level.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Parliament urges speedy action on oil pollution

Everyone remembers the Amoco Cadiz and other recent maritime disasters. But the legal steps to combat oil spills and other tanker accidents sometimes take a long time to be adopted.

The European Parliament at its February session displayed its impatience with the lengthy decision-making process in the Community by adopting a resolution urging the Council of Ministers to enact as soon as possible all the proposals that the European Commission presented in the aftermath of the Amoco Cadiz spill and the Ekofisk explosion in the North Sea.

The Parliament resolution came after a lengthy study by a British member, Lord Bruce of Donnington which found that, with only rare exceptions, accidents at sea were all due to 'human error'.

The report and resolution recommended that all Community governments implement international treaties and measures designed to improve safety at sea, and reduce the risks of oil pollution.

The Commission, which has already proposed a whole package of measures ranging from requirements for ship inspections to research and rescue training, was also urged to examine other approaches. These would include a maritime radar surveillance system and the possibility of a 'black box' device such as those used on airliners to register information that would be useful in determining the cause of accidents.

## IN BRIEF

Provisional figures indicate that industrial production in the Community grew by 4% last October and 4.2% in November over the same periods in 1977. The experts say that there has been an upturn in industrial production recently and that it is gathering momentum.



## Europeans likely to be fewer in the next century

Forecasts of world population by the turn of the century, let alone the year 2050, are hard to comprehend. There are so many noughts in the figures that it is almost impossible to picture the reality involved in trying to ensure adequate employment, food, clothing and shelter for everyone.

In Europe the scenario is likely to be completely different from the world pattern. By the year 2050 the number of inhabitants in the nine European Community countries will have fallen from the present 260 to 243 million and there will be 20 million fewer people of working age.

The main trend over the next 70 years, however, will be a fall in the number of young people. At present 23% of the population, by 2050 they will represent only 18%. Correspondingly, the proportion of old people will rise from 13 to 18%, according to a report on demographic change in the Community prepared by a group of independent experts.

The most noticeable fall in population will take place in Germany—from 61 to 38 million, 20% of whom will be old people. Ireland will be the only country which will still be growing.

The populations of France and Italy will show an increase of between 3 and 5 million on today's figures, while the numbers in the United Kingdom will be roughly the same as now.

Denmark, on the other hand, will increase its present number of 5 million by only a few hundred thousands which would place it behind Ireland, whose current population of 3 million will have more than doubled to 7.5 million, Belgium will be just under 8 million (almost 10 million now). In percentage terms, however, the most drastic changes will take place in Luxembourg, where the number of inhabitants will fall by a third from 360 000 to 244 000.

Of more immediate concern for the Community, however, is the medium-term outlook up to the year 1995. Forecasts of population growth will affect many of the decisions that need to be taken by governments.

An increase in the number of young people will mean more teachers and schools will have to be provided. On the other hand, if a large percentage of the population is retired, different facilities will be required.

Between 1975 and 1995 the population of the Community, now around 260 million, will increase by only 0.2%, compared with a 0.75% rise over the previous 20 years, says the report, basing its predictions on an extrapolation of fertility and mortality trend in Europe. In Germany and Luxembourg the population will actually decrease, a tendency that will speed up towards the end of the century.

The highest rate of increase will take place in Ireland (1%), a country which in the past has always seen emigration counter its naturally high birth rate.

But what effect will this have on future job opportunities? Between 1975 and 1985, the report calculates that the potential labour force will rise by some 9.6 million, the majority of whom will be women. With unemployment already running at high levels because of the world economic crisis, its conclusions make gloomy reading.

'It is clear that the economic growth achieved in 1976-77 together with the forecast growth up to 1985 will probably be lower than that necessary to accommodate both the stock of unemployed and the increase in the potential labour supply... This is equivalent to saying that some people who would like to work will not find jobs...'

As a result many men and women who would like to go out to work may find they have to stay at home. Whether this will lead to an increase in the size of the average family—now at its lowest level ever in time of peace—remains to be seen.

Reasons for this fall in the birth rate are obvious: nowadays people tend to marry later; the birth of the first child usually does not occur as soon after marriage as it used to; and more time generally elapses between the births of successive children.

The one major exception is Ireland where on average each woman bears 3.50 children during her life. In 1976 there were 1.44 children per woman in Germany. In Luxembourg it was 1.46, Switzerland 1.54, Netherlands 1.65, Sweden 1.69, England and Wales 1.72, Denmark 1.75, France 1.83 and Italy 2.04.



## IN BRIEF

The Commission's Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs has just published the first issue of a new periodical entitled 'European Economy'. It replaces various economic periodicals published by the Commission and will appear three times a year in March, July and November. Inquiries from Sales Offices listed on our back cover.

## LIFESTYLE

## There is still no accounting for our taste in food

'One man's meat is another man's poison', runs the saying. Perhaps an exaggeration to describe eating habits in the Community, but noticeable differences still exist between the food consumed in southern Italy and northern Scotland, for instance.

As trade expands, the consumer finds it easier to choose between a wider range of foodstuffs. What we eat, however, continues to reflect our different traditions, economic systems, tax policies, health legislation and price controls.

More citrus fruit, cheese, sugar, eggs and meat are now eaten in Europe than five years ago, but on the other hand public demand for fresh milk products, potatoes, vegetables, fruit and wine is less.

Meat has seen the most obvious change in public taste, with pork and poultry consumption continuing to rise, partly because efficient production has kept prices fairly low. France leads the way here with 104 kilos per head consumed in 1977, followed by Germany, Belgium and Ireland—all just over 90 kilos, while in Italy, Britain and Denmark it was a little over 70 kilos.

The average Frenchman consumed a hefty 32 kilos of beef and veal—the equivalent of an 8 oz steak every

two or three days. Next came the Belgians (29 kilos), who have made steak and chips one of their most popular dishes. Other countries annually put away 23 to 24 kilos per head, except for Denmark where consumption is a low 15 kilos. This is more than made up for by the Danes liking for pork (42 kilos) which is second only to the massive German averages of 53 kilos. Mutton, lamb and goat are only popular in Britain and Ireland—7 and 10 kilos apiece.

Given the importance of fish to many regions of the Community, it is surprising that consumption is not higher. A Dane will eat 21 kilos a year, a Briton 15 and a Frenchman 13. But in all other countries fish seems to be a taste acquired only by the few.

But what do Europeans eat with their meat and fish? The ubiquitous potato is still the Community's number one vegetable. Here Ireland is in a class of its own—111 kilos per head a year, enough for each person to have two average-sized potatoes a day. Consumption is also high in Belgium (98 kilos) and Britain (84 kilos) as can be seen by the frequency with which chips are offered at meals.

The taste for potatoes in Italy is still underdeveloped. But an Italian bolsters his 34 kilos of potatoes a year with pasta (122 kilos of cereals in 1977). This was more than 50% over the average for the rest of the Community.

Rice still does not appear to have conquered the European palate. The French, Belgians, Dutch and Italians

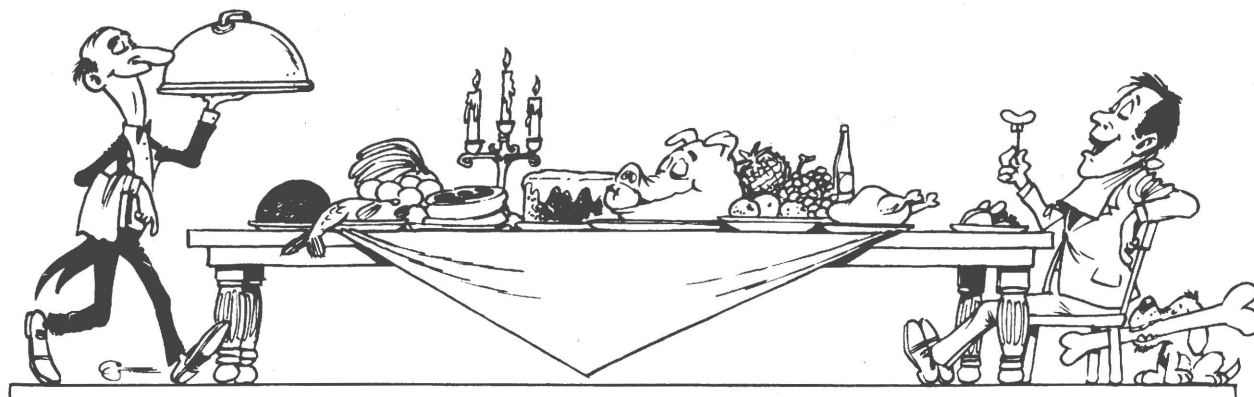
will knock back some 5 kilos a year—more than double their Community colleagues.

The northern countries in the Community seem to be particularly deficient when it comes to vegetables. Denmark (49 kilos), Britain (67 kilos), Germany (70 kilos), the Netherlands (79 kilos), Ireland (81 kilos) and Belgium (82) all consume less than the Community average (94 kilos). Perhaps it is due to the sun which makes it possible to grow a wider variety of vegetables, but an Italian will eat an average of 1 pound of vegetables a day (149 kilos a year).

The situation is similar with fruit. The three most recent Community members, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Denmark munch into 27, 32 and 38 kilos respectively each year. This is less than half the 88 kilos eaten by a German.

But northern Europeans get their body-building energy from other sources. An Irishman will consume over 212 kilos of dairy products a year, a Dane 158, a Briton 144 and a Dutchman 140. Consumption in other countries is below 90 kilos a year.

It is only in France and Italy that wine is drunk to any great extent to wash down the food. Both countries have long and famous traditions as wine producers and consumers. A Frenchman drinks just over 100 litres of wine a year, and an Italian only 10 litres less. In Germany, the only other major wine producer in the Community, consumption is an average 23 litres. In Britain it is only 5, while in Ireland it is a lowly 3 litres.



## Money isn't everything

No matter which European Community country we live in we calculate our well-being mostly by what we earn. But fringe benefits such as bonuses of extra holidays can also make life more pleasant. How do the nine Member States compare?

Wages and salaries form the highest share of total labour costs in Denmark and the lowest in Italy, according to the most recent figures available. In Denmark they account for 1% of total costs but in Italy only 50%. The average for the nine Member States is about 62%. The proportion was also relatively high in the United Kingdom and Ireland (76% and 77% respectively).

On the other hand premiums and bonuses form less than 1% of total labour costs in Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland. In Italy they represent 8% compared with a Community average of 3.5%.

Payments for days not worked—holidays, public holidays and holiday bonuses—are also proportionately very high in Italy, accounting for 12% of total labour costs.

They are also high in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. In the United Kingdom and Ireland they are lower because there are fewer public holidays.

All these items—wages, holidays and bonuses, together with benefits in kind make up the direct costs in the structure of total labour costs. They are highest in Denmark accounting for 93% and lowest in Italy where they are only 70%.

It is not surprising then that indirect costs—mainly social security contributions paid by the employers—are highest in Italy where they account for 28% of total costs. They are also relatively high in France, the Netherlands and Belgium.

In Denmark the employers' social security contributions account for only 5% of total labour costs. The proportion is also relatively low in the United Kingdom and Ireland.



## LEISURE

### Excuse me, you're blocking my sun

Most of us have had experience of endless August traffic jams, overheated cars and fuming drivers, as everyone flees from the factories and cities to the sea and sun.

Is there any reason why Paris and Milan should grind to a halt because everyone takes their holidays at the same time? August is not even the best month: the days are growing shorter and the weather is often better in June and July.

The obvious answer is to stagger the holidays between May and October but so far France is the only European Community Member State to have made much effort in this direction. Its greatest success, though, has been with the February skiing holiday when the schools in each of the main regions take a different week off.

In reply to a recent European Parliament question, the European Commission said that a meeting of the nine Member States could be held soon to exchange views and experiences on how to spread out holidays more evenly. The Commission is already carrying out a study on this subject.

One problem is that decisions on the dates of school holidays are sometimes taken at local rather than central government level. This is true in the Netherlands which is divided into three zones and the start of the holidays is phased so as to avoid excessive concentration.

In Germany the 11 'Länder' decide the timing of the school holidays. For some years firms' holidays have been coordinated with school holidays. The phasing has been quite successful. For example in Baden-Württemberg holidays begin in mid-June while in Berlin they start at the beginning of August.

Irish secondary schools enjoy the longest holidays starting in mid-June and ending in early September. The Italians also enjoy long holidays from 1 July to mid-September.

For both economic and social reasons it is clearly desirable to phase holidays over a longer period. Holiday resorts would benefit from a longer season and at the same time holiday-makers would benefit from more room on the beach and less exorbitant peak season prices.

Nevertheless, the organizational problems involved, not to speak of long-cherished traditions, make it likely that we will have to make haste slowly—which is, after all, the safest way of getting to the beach.



## Stepping out for a united Europe

Walkers of Europe will soon have the chance to put their feet to the test during the 7th European March which takes place from 30 March to 21 April.

The idea is to stop talking and start walking. There will be enough talk about Europe during the campaign leading up to the first European Parliament elections in June. Instead the aim is for people of different European nationalities to share a common experience.

This year, walkers from 10 different centres will converge on two destinations. One group will go to Brussels to celebrate the 1 000th anniversary of the city. Another group will go to Strasbourg to mark the 30th anniversary of the Council of Europe.

The walkers will set out from Aix-la-Chapelle, Bonn, Canterbury, The Hague, Luxembourg, Milan, Ostend, Strasbourg, Stuttgart and Zürich.

More importance is attached to taking part than in completing the itinerary. Whereas in the first march in 1973 most of the walkers were students and teachers they are now mostly working people ranging from coal miners to lawyers. Most can only afford to take a few days off work.

Overnight lodging will range from youth hostels to the homes of local people—rarely hotels.

Those wishing to take part should write to:  
La Marche de l'Europe  
c/o Mr Paul Cliquet  
Rue François Stroobant 30  
B - 1060 Brussels

Participating cost varies between £30—£70 (2 000-6 500 FB) depending on the distance you want to march.

## INVESTMENT

### Community's Bank boosts low-interest lending by 40%

Lending by the Luxembourg based European Investment Bank (EIB) which issues long-term loans at low interest rates for projects of Community interest, rose by 40% in 1978 to £1 500 million according to preliminary figures which were recently released.

The nine Member States received 90% of the Bank's loans. The remainder went to Mediterranean countries and to a number of developing countries.

Italy was the main beneficiary in 1978 receiving £566 million. This represented 43% of loans made in the Community.

Nearly threequarters of the Bank's aid went to help depressed regions in the nine Member States. The aid was concentrated on areas suffering from high unemployment and low income levels. These are either the less-developed areas, such as the Italian Mezzogiorno or those suffering because of the closure of traditional industries, like steel or shipbuilding.

Energy projects were given priority in 1978, being allocated over one third of EIB aid. The projects mainly concerned electricity production and transmission and the development of oil and gas resources.

The United Kingdom received £286 million of EIB aid in 1978 and was the second major beneficiary among the nine.

Among the projects financed were the building of high-speed diesel trains for the London-Aberdeen main line and the extension of Sumburgh airport in the Shetlands which is used as a transit point for the North Sea Oil and Gas Industry.

Ireland received £78 million in 1978 which was the highest amount in *per capita* terms among the Nine.

Among the major Irish schemes which the Bank helped to finance were the development of Cork harbour. Several loans were given to improve road links between the East and West and also with the North. A loan was also given for a new car ferry to operate between Ireland and Britain.

#### EIB loans in 1978

Country	Amount in million £	% of total
Italy	566	43
United Kingdom	288	21.9
France	240	18.3
Ireland	78	6.0
Denmark	71	5.4
Belgium	41	3.1
Germany	30	2.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 317</b>	<b>100</b>



The European Investment Bank was created under the 1957 Treaty of Rome which established the Community. The Bank, whose capital of £4 700 million is subscribed by the nine Member States, operates on a non-profit making basis. It finances its lending operations by borrowing on the international money markets.

The Bank gives priority to projects which help to develop or restructure industry in the least favoured regions of the Community. Loans rarely exceed 40% the investment. In the first 20 years of its existence the Bank lent £5 000 million for industrial and infrastructural investment, creating or safeguarding a quarter of a million jobs.

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## AGRICULTURE

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### Most of our food is home-grown

As a group of countries, the Community is remarkably self-sufficient when it comes to supplying the food needs of its inhabitants. This is due to a number of factors, including climate and soil and, to a certain extent, the Community's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Apart from ensuring that our farmers produce enough of the type of food they can grow, the CAP enables the nine Member States to sell freely to one another and thus complement each other's production.

Naturally this self-sufficiency is not spread evenly between the nine countries. For example, the French have almost twice the wheat they need to bake their bread, while Ireland has just over half. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the Community is more than self-sufficient in this particular product.

Trade agreements with certain non-member countries help bolster our supplies. Some of these even allowed for imports into the Community during 1978, although the domestic market was already saturated. This was the case for butter from New Zealand and sugar from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries with which the Community has special agreements.

Other methods used to ensure this self-sufficiency in food—a commodity subject to frequent changes in the weather—include the use of storage facilities to prevent hiccoughs in the market.

As an example of what can happen the Community was adequately provided for from domestic sources for soft wheat in 1977 but it registered an average 20% deficit for other grains, with grain maize in particular being in short supply (only a 40% self-sufficiency rate).

Meat is not scarce in the Nine. Total production is only a few per cent below total needs, while for pork and poultry it is more than enough. This is mainly due to the Dutch and Danes who breed two to three times more poultry and pigs than their domestic populations require.

We also grow almost all the vegetables we need. Yet despite being the Community's most widely eaten vegetable, 4% of our potatoes have to be imported.

Nor are milk and dairy products in short supply. Skimmed-milk powder, cheese, butter and eggs are all plentiful. In fact, for the first two products, Ireland's production is over five times its needs, while the level of self-sufficiency in the Netherlands and Denmark is also more than double. Only in Italy, and to some extent Belgium and the United Kingdom, is there a domestic shortage.

The importance of trade with third countries, however, makes itself felt when it comes to fruit, where Europe's production is more than 20% below its needs, with Italy being the only country to grow more than its population eats.

But it is for vegetable fats, oils and seeds that the Community is most heavily dependent on foreign suppliers, who sell it between 80 and 95% of its needs. Only Italy and France, which between them account for almost three quarters of Community production, are remotely capable of supplying their own needs for these products.

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## IN BRIEF

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The Community's clothing industry, on which many jobs depend, is facing stiff competition from the rest of the world where labour often costs less. Leaders of the industry are meeting in Brussels on 15 and 16 March to discuss ways of meeting this competition through technological innovation.

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## TRANSPORT

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### Community driving licence makes one more pit stop

The road to a common driver's licence for all motorists in the European Community has once again proved to be bumpy and full of obstacles.

When Transport Ministers from the nine Community countries met in Brussels recently eight of them were agreed that drivers with a permit in one member country should automatically be entitled to obtain one in another if they went to live there.

The British representative agreed that this was feasible for private cars and motorcycles, but not for lorries and buses. He introduced statistics to support his argument that tests for larger vehicles were not the same throughout the Community and that the driver safety record could be better assured in the United Kingdom through national tests. Other participants at the meeting contested the validity of the British accident figures and presented some of their own.

The meeting ended with charges that the British trade unions which represent drivers were largely responsible for the opposition to mutual recognition of the Community driver's licence. The issue now seems at least momentarily stalled since the other member countries want the common permit to extend to all categories of drivers and not just private motorists.

On another touchy issue, the Ministers decided more time was needed to study a proposal to establish strict standards for aircraft noise within the Community. The proposed limits would mean that a number of existing European and American airplanes would be unfit for service. This would require an early and costly start on construction of replacement planes. It was decided that a more detailed examination of the industrial and economic implications should be made.



## Time for computers to show respect for our privacy

In this 'gold-fish bowl' society in which we live the concept of privacy has been trodden over by a whole host of governmental and commercial invaders.

In most industrialized nations the individual is numbered, photographed, catalogued, filed, indexed and cross-referenced from the cradle to the grave.

Modern technology has helped spread this phenomenon via the computer data bank to the point where there is both an official and public reaction. More and more people are becoming concerned by the amount and the traffic of personal information in modern society.

The computer and information revolutions which have seen the birth of virtually instantaneous transmission of volumes of facts and statistics about every man, woman and child are also spawning a counter-revolution.

More and more governments are in the process of applying or studying ways to control this heretofore unrestricted flow of information. In the minds of some critics, the invasion of privacy and the collection of centralized data about a population is a first step toward authoritarianism.

While most authorities have not reached this stage of paranoia, they want to safeguard this basic human right while at the same time maintaining the free circulation of information, which is also a cherished ideal.

The governments and parliaments of the United States, Sweden, Canada, Germany, France, Austria, Denmark and others have adopted various legal controls on how personal data can be collected, used, transmitted bought and sold.

In some cases, the individual has to be informed when some fact about him has been stored in a computer data bank and some countries have instituted a procedure allowing for the citizen to correct erroneous information about himself. Germany and Sweden each have a sort of 'privacy ombudsman' assigned to handle complaints objectively.

But in this complex day and age, even resolving this problem and restoring an undeniable right is not simple. Such national legal restrictions on the use of data raise almost as many problems as they solve.

First of all business and government have a lot at stake in accurate and rapid information. Companies regard payroll, market or supply statistics as their life's blood. This information is regularly transmitted from a plant in one country to headquarters or sales offices in others.

Governments also collect and exchange computerized data on suspected criminals, the spread of pollution,

transportation and countless other uses that are necessary to the public welfare. And they have invested millions in computer systems which they regard as the most cost-effective way of doing the job.

When governments adopt different national sets of controls and restrictions on the communication of information, it can represent a serious obstacle to smooth operations. Not only that, but some experts foresee possible international trade wars over information as countries try to protect citizens or control the information to which others want access.

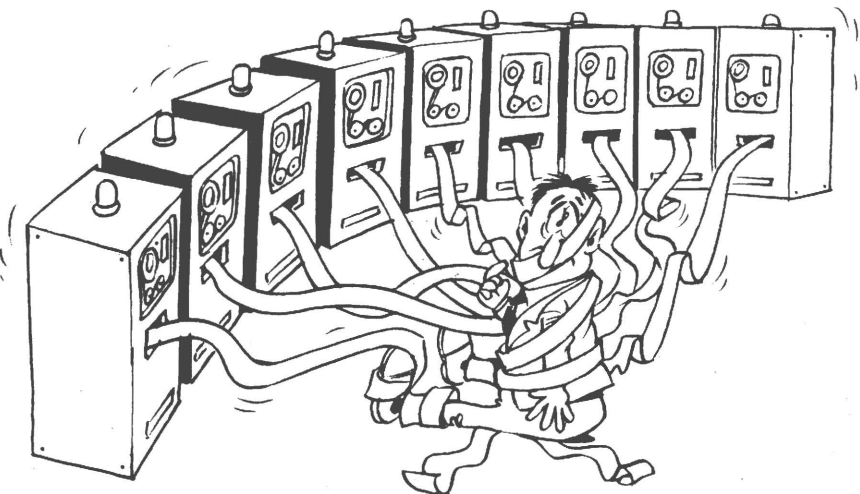
That's why experts from governments and industry have been studying this problem internationally for several years. To try to halt the spread of varied legislation they meet within international organization to prepare treaties or codes that would coordinate or harmonize their approaches to privacy protection. This way, there would be less disruption to the increasingly international transfer of computer information. Years of work within the Council of Europe in Strasbourg are expected to produce a draft treaty later this year. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, composed of major industrial nations, is also studying a code.

The European Parliament and the European Commission have also been active in this field. The Parliament has held open public hearings on the problem and adopted resolutions urging a joint approach by the nine Community countries.

The European Commissioner in charge of this sector, Etienne Davignon, recently informed the Parliament that three studies were being carried out in research institutes in the Community on the subject. He added that the Commission, would wait for the Council of Europe treaty to be completed before offering its proposals.

### IN BRIEF

**Hands across the Border.** A £10 million drainage project between Irish border counties is to get backing worth more than £5 million from Community funds.



## CULTURE

## Common language for Community is ruled out

The criticism that the European Community is 'one of the few international institutions to have considered itself... exempt from the need to take any action in the sphere of cultural affairs' may once have been true. Not any longer.

The quote comes from a publication called 'Towards a European Cultural Policy' issued by the European Cooperation Fund (ECF). A private international organization, the ECF produces a regular series of topical papers, each of which concentrates on a specific problem.

Written by Henri Brugmans, the rector of the College of Europe at Bruges from 1952-1970, the paper sets out a number of options for Community action in the cultural field.

The idea that there will ever be a common European language is rejected by the author early on. Any attempt to try and achieve this, he argues, would go against deeply engrained national and regional identities.

But to prevent the Community from becoming a Tower of Babel, especially once Greece, Spain and Portugal are Members, he recommends that there should be three 'major' languages

—English, French and German. Other possibilities are not discounted, including wider use of Esperanto and more imaginative training of language teachers.

Nor are authors forgotten. Mr Brugmans would like to see a Community-wide Pen Club to help guarantee equal protection and rights throughout the Nine for authors. Likewise he argues that greater uniformity in the system of royalties from country to country is needed to ensure social justice for the creators of works of art.

The media also has a role to play. Eurovision, which has been made possible through technological advances, should add cultural events to its present sports coverage. There is now increasing cooperation between the press, whether it be in producing a joint 'European' supplement or sharing correspondents throughout the world, and this is to be encouraged, he adds.

Many of the points raised by Mr Brugmans are contained in a document issued by the Commission in December 1977 on Community action in the cultural sector. The document's strategy of concentrating on certain practical measures—taxation systems applying to cultural foundations or copyright law—and preserving Europe's architectural heritage was well received when debated by Euro-MPs in Strasbourg last month.

Perhaps of more importance is the decision taken at the Rome Summit in March 1977 to establish a European

Foundation. The brain-child of former Belgian Prime Minister, Léo Tindemans, the Foundation's tasks will be 'to further mutual understanding between the peoples of the Community'. Based in Paris, it will concentrate on increasing the exchange of people and ideas in the Community, on encouraging language teaching, and on fostering an awareness of Europe's common heritage and development.

## SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### Migrant workers: first casualties of any crisis

With the onset of the world economic recession in 1974 and rising unemployment the problem of the Community's 3.8 million migrant workers from non-Member States has grown increasingly serious.

They were encouraged to come during the boom years of the 1960s and early 1970s. Some countries are now encouraging them to go home. In most cases they came to fill the lowest paid factory and manual jobs. These are the first to be lost when recession strikes.

The problem for the existing Member States is not likely to get any easier. Greek workers will be able to apply for jobs throughout the Community seven years after Greece joins. This could mean a large influx of Greek workers in 1988.

The problem could be even more serious after Spain and Portugal join. At the moment Spaniards and Portuguese have to apply for special work permits. In the not too distant future they will be competing for work on equal terms with citizens of the present Nine.

Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian workers in the Community enjoy benefits offered by the Community under Agreements it signed with their countries in 1976. They cannot simply be discarded when the work runs out.

Turkish workers have been given some advantages over those from other non-member countries. Where do emigrants from these poorer countries aim for in search of a job?

France has the largest concentration of migrant workers—1.6 million. It is followed by Germany with 1.5 million and the United Kingdom a long way behind with 475 000.



The largest single concentration of foreign workers is the 517 000 Turks in Germany. There are another 64 000 spread throughout the other Member States.

Germany also hosts 377 000 Yugoslavs. There are fewer than 10 000 in the other eight Member States.

The 640 000 Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian workers in France are a legacy of former colonial days. But the most numerous are the Portuguese —475 000. There are also 265 000 Spanish workers.

The vast majority of foreign workers in the United Kingdom come from India and Pakistan. The Spanish are the most numerous of the European workers but they number only 21 000.

There are also 1.3 million Community workers living in the other Member States. The 232 000 Irish in the United Kingdom are the most numerous followed by the 230 000 Italians in France. There are also 91 000 Italians in Belgium.

Community migrants have, of course, the right to work and live as long as they wish in any of the Nine Member States.

*Foreign Workers from Non-Member Countries in the Community (1 000)*

France	1 600	(1975)
Germany	1 481	(1977)
United Kingdom	475	(1975)
Belgium	128	(1976)
Netherlands	39	(1977)
Italy	35	(1975)
Denmark	27	(1977)
Luxembourg	17	(1977)
Ireland	2	(1975)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 804</b>	

## Accidents at work: a sign of the times

Another milestone in the combat against accidents and injuries at work has just been passed. By 1 January, all the member countries of the Community were to have adopted and published national laws to conform with a 1977 Community regulation requiring clear and standard warning signals about occupational hazards.



These measures will have to be applied and all warning panels in place by the beginning of 1981 at the latest. They form part of a stepped-up campaign the Community institutions have begun to wage against accidents at work.

An action programme on occupational health and safety was adopted by the Council of Ministers in July of 1978. It foresees a number of projects of research into the causes of accidents at work and ways of preventing them. It also involves studies of ways of improving the safety of certain machinery and equipment starting at the planning and design stages.

This action programme has been initiated in the belief that a high percentage of our population is exposed to some danger at work and that the cost to society of occupational accidents and disease is higher than is normally thought.

While the early phase of the programme is involved primarily with studies, it is expected to lead eventually to improvements in safety at work through specific changes such as regulations governing employee's exposure to dangerous substances like dust or fumes.

## Bigger share of cake for needy

Governments in the European Community are gradually spending more money on social welfare. In other words people are being given higher priority compared with roads, bridges weapons and government bureaucracies.

Italy and Luxembourg are the only exceptions among the nine Member States. In the other seven, social expenditure is rising faster than general government expenditure.

This means that governments are paying more on unemployment benefits, pensions, dental and health care.

The European Commission recently produced these figures:

*Average annual increase in social and general government expenditure 1970-76 (%)*

	<i>Social</i>	<i>Government</i>
Belgium	18.9	16.7
Denmark	17.1	15.3
France	17.3	15.7
Germany	13.8	12.6
Ireland	26.2	23.1
Netherlands	19.7	17.3
United Kingdom	20.0	19.3
Italy	20.7	21.2
Luxembourg	17.6	18.5

## IN BRIEF

The European Youth Orchestra was in Brussels recently with its President, the former British Prime Minister Edward Heath. The 135 members of the orchestra drawn from young musicians in the nine Member States, were given a reception by the European Commission which has provided a grant of £16 750 for the orchestra's tour of Community capitals this year.

## THIRD WORLD

### Commission examines plight of refugees

Boatloads of Vietnamese refugees have been fleeing daily over the past few months towards Thailand and Malaysia. Thousands of black Zimbabwean (Rhodesian) refugees have been streaming across the border into neighbouring Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) there will be an extra 210 000 refugees in South East Asia and an extra 220 000 in Southern Africa in the coming months.

The Head of UNHCR, former Danish Prime Minister Poul Hartling, recently visited Brussels to discuss this problem with Claude Cheysson, European Commissioner responsible for Development Aid.

As a result the Commission is examining how the Community can give more aid. It will also keep the particular needs of these areas in mind when it distributes food aid under its 1979 programme.

The Community is already the main contributor to UNHCR funds. In 1978 it provided US\$ 14 million, equivalent to nearly 40% of total contributions. Of this amount US\$ 11 million went to help refugees in Southern Africa and in the Horn of Africa.

### More use could be made of Fund

Payments from the European Development Fund to the 56 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) developing countries with which the European Community signed the 1975 Lome Convention greatly speeded up during the second half of 1978.

With one year left to run of the five-year Convention which covers trade and aid, only about two-thirds of the £2 000 million set aside in the fund to help develop the ACP economies, some of which are among the most backward in the world, has been paid out.

However, payments are being speeded up. According to the Commission £38.2 million was paid out in October compared with £20.1 million in July.

The European Commission gave this information recently in reply to a question in the European Parliament concerning an article in the German magazine 'Der Spiegel' alleging that the resources of the Fund were not being fully utilized.

One reason for delays is that many of the countries belonging to the Lome Convention had no previous experience of dealing with the Fund. These are mainly the anglophone Commonwealth countries which make up over half the total number of ACP States. They were therefore unfamiliar with the procedure for issuing tenders and concluding contracts for projects.

To help them the Community has set up delegations in each ACP State. However it takes time for the local administrations to grasp how the aid machine functions.

A second Lome Convention is currently being negotiated and is expected to come into force when the first agreement expires.

### Quality as well as quantity needed

By the year 2000 there will be an extra 2 billion mouths to feed in the world. There are already between 500 and 1 billion people suffering from malnutrition due to the lack of good quality food.

Not enough food is being produced, especially in Asian and African developing countries, to feed the world's population. There is also a lot of food being wasted because it is of poor quality.

The European Commission will shortly propose to the Council of Ministers that a research programme be launched into the effects of food processing and distribution on food quality and nutritional value. If lessons can be learned in the Community they can then be passed on to the developing countries.

The Community has also taken other action to safeguard food quality. Last October it began research into four ways of improving food supplies:

- general food research and quality;
- beef production and quality;
- combating animal diseases;
- pest control.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Work-sharing may help to shorten our dole queues

Reducing unemployment has become every Community government's top priority in recent years as the total number of jobless in the nine Member States continues to top six million.

One way to improve the situation which has received attention in many countries has been the idea of work-sharing. It was first proposed by European trade unionists, but business and industry have largely opposed it because they feel that it would raise costs without assuring new employment.

European Commission Vice-President Henk Vredeling, who is responsible for social and employment issues, is preparing to introduce various work-sharing measures that he feels would help create new jobs.

While he acknowledges that such measures will not provide a complete solution, Commissioner Vredeling commented recently that 'in this situation it is fair to ask whether we can create enough employment with traditional measures or not'.

The proposals he and his staff are working on include a limitation on systematic over-time work. Others would aim at reducing the annual time worked, seek to create a new shift in industries that now employ three shifts, and to develop retirement systems that allow earlier retirement. Another portion of the plan would try to eliminate the abuse of temporary workers and help create more part-time jobs.

The idea of spreading the work to additional workers has also received the support of the European Parliament. At its February session, the Parliament adopted a resolution which recommended such steps in the trouble-plagued steel industry.

At the same Parliament session, European Commission President Roy Jenkins also promised that the proposals currently being worked on would be formally introduced sometime in the first half of 1979. They will then be considered by the Council of Ministers.



## ENERGY



### There could be uranium in them there hills

The stoppage of Iranian oil exports clearly shows the danger of relying too heavily on foreign supplies of energy.

The Community is keenly aware of the problem and since the 1973 oil crisis has been trying to develop its own energy resources so as to achieve greater self-sufficiency.

As part of this effort, the European Commission recently decided to grant £3.3 million to promote the exploration of uranium within the nine Member States. The money will be used to partly finance national projects submitted to the Commission by potential prospectors.

This is the fourth instalment of Community aid to encourage uranium prospecting since 1976. The Community has given £7.4 million to help finance 29 projects in Greenland, Ireland, United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and Italy.

France produces nearly all the Community's supplies of uranium but this could satisfy only one quarter of the consumption of 10 000 tonnes in nuclear power stations in 1978. By 1990 demand will grow to over 30 000 tonnes annually.

Although the Community has reserves of 120 000 tonnes its annual production will rise to no more than 4 000 tonnes by 1990. It will continue to import heavily from Canada, Niger and Gabon. Australia will also become a major supplier.

## EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

### Star candidates

The former Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans has announced that he will be a candidate in next June's first direct elections to the European Parliament. Mr Tindemans is President of the European People's Party, the group which represents Christian-Democratic parties of the Member States. Another former Prime Minister, Mr Jacques Chirac, will head the list of the French *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR). Mr Chirac is President of the RPR, which forms the European Progressive Democrats Group in the European Parliament with the Irish *Fianna Fail* party and the Danish Progress Party.

## EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

### Fears of Neo-Nazism provoke debate

An alleged upsurge of racism, anti-semitism and neo-Nazism in Europe was the subject of a recent debate in the European Parliament in the presence of a number of former Resistance fighters in the Visitors' Gallery.

Gérard Bordu, one of the French Communists who launched the debate attacked the 'nostalgia for Nazism' which was erupting in different parts of Europe. Contrary to post-war agreements and some national laws, he alleged that SS-units and other groups had been formed to revive the militaristic spirit of the Hitler era.

While not wishing to 'pillory' any single people or State, he urged that the German Parliament be petitioned to cancel the statute of limitations which would make war criminals immune from prosecution in the Federal Republic of Germany after the end of this year.

A Dutch Socialist, Piet Dankert, on the other hand, disagreed that there had been a mushrooming of neo-Nazi manifestations. Thanks to films like 'Holocaust', he said, people in Europe were now much more aware of the dangers of racism.

French Christian Democrat Jean-Marie Caro shared Mr Dankert's view about how valuable it was for people to know the facts. But he said, there could be no mercy for the Nazi criminals.

The debate was brought to a close when British Socialists put down a motion urging the nine Member States to sign a 1974 European convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitation to crimes against humanity and to war crimes. This motion was agreed by the Parliament.

## IN BRIEF

Loans worth £101 million have been made by the European Investment Bank, the Community's long-term finance institution, for power supply schemes in England and Wales.





## Another way of looking at food

For a number of reasons more and more people have become food-conscious in recent years. It may be because they are either watching their waistline, their budget—or both.

For one thing, our pop-culture has definitely made slimness the 'in' look. For another, dieticians have traced a number of diseases, functional disturbances or various ills to too rich a diet. Then there is also the steady increase in the cost of food.

Perhaps we eat too much, perhaps not. But one thing is certain: there is no shortage of food. This is partly as a result of the absolute priority given to ensuring against shortage by the European Community. For the past 20 years of the Community's existence, feeding its citizens and giving its farmers a better standard of living has been the subject of a constant policy. But

in 20 years a number of things have changed.

In 1958, the Community had 14.4 million persons employed in agriculture; today only 7.5 million remain (in the original six Member States) and 8.5 million in the Nine. Again in 1958, farmers represented 20% of the working population and accounted for 8% of the total output of goods and services. Now they number only 10% of the labour force and turn out about 5% of the gross domestic product.

In those 20 years some two million farms have disappeared. Only 5.3 million remain and about one-quarter of those produce more than three-fourths of total agricultural output. Seven million farmers have left the fields, attracted by other jobs with better opportunities—better pay, regular working hours and holidays.

The rural exodus is also the result of technological progress (agricultural machinery, fertilizers, irrigation) which also has led to fewer, better paid workers being required. The small farm has given way to the specialized agri-business combine and in that period farm production has doubled. The Community has played an important part in this process.

The Community has guided this development (which in the United States began some 200 years earlier) which has tended to draw agriculture out of its isolation and to integrate it into a larger economic system. The guiding policy of the Community has been to enable the farmer to acquire an income comparable to other socio-economic groups.

The Common Agricultural Policy has been based on a united market, free trade inside the common market and protection against low-cost imports and against external price upheavals.

The benefits of this enlarged system have been generally recognized: a larger market for producers, more choice for the consumer and more regional specialization.

Even so, the Common Agricultural Policy is continuously the target of violent criticism. Many political figures and citizens argue that it costs too much, emphasizing that agricultural spending consumes about two-thirds of the total Community budget. In 1977 it cost £4 600 million. Member States in the same period spent £6 700 million for their own national farm programmes. This support of farming cost 0.4% of the total Community production of goods and services. While this figure is low, experts feel that it could be a lot less if the Community has a unified economic and monetary system and border taxes needed to even out currency fluctuations could be abolished.

Another criticism, which is well-founded, concerns the surpluses in certain products, notably milk, butter and sugar, which cannot be absorbed by domestic consumption or exports.

The dairy sector by itself takes up £1 600 million or one-third of the European Farm Fund, which is used to support prices. The dairy surplus is about 14% of the total production, and it is growing by 20% each year. Many feel that the problem could be solved by just cutting down production. But such a move has been rejected vigorously by the two million farmers who depend on this output for their income. There is therefore a social and economic contradiction which is an eternal dilemma for Europe seeking to strike a balance.

Perhaps the answer lies in farmers and weight-conscious consumers compromising—one to grow less and the other to eat more!

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